The Church in Korea in Modern Times

The Ecclesiastical History of Korea in the 20th Century and the Present Apostolate

By

Owen MacPolin

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"THERE ARE SOME OF WHOM THERE IS NO MEMORIAL: WHO ARE PERISHED, AS IF THEY HAD NEVER BEEN . . . BUT THESE WERE MEN OF MERCY WHOSE GODLY DEEDS HAVE NOT FAILED. GOOD THINGS CONTINUE WITH THEIR SEED."

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1.

Beginnings of the Modern Period

1. The history of the Church in Korea during the first hundred years (i.e., from 1784-1881) of its existence in that country is one of almost uninterrupted persecution.

2. In the year 1876 an incident occurred, the repercussions of which administered a profound shock to the xenophobia of the rulers of the "Hermit Kingdom." That year Bishop Ridel was arrested and imprisoned, and the French Minister in Pekin demanded his release. The Japanese also made a similar demarche on the bishop's behalf and forced a treaty on the Koreans. As a result the bishop was released and sent back to China.

3. The intervention of the French, and even to a greater extent that of the Japanese, was a profound shock for the Korean Government. Fear of foreign intervention put an end to further arrests, but the missionaries had still to remain in hiding. Indeed, one missionary was arrested in 1879 and sent back to China. The bloody era, however, was closed and a royal edict of June 12, 1881, while insulting the Catholic religion, warned the people that the only way of combating it was to follow faithfully the teaching of Confucius and the new religion would die a natural death.

4. Liberty—and that circumscribed—came to the missionaries only with the conclusion of treaties of commerce with the Powers. The United States signed a treaty with Korea on May 5, 1882. The European Powers followed suit. These acts stirred up the fury of the literati and there were attacks on Japanese residents. As a consequence, the Japanese obtained the right of stationing troops in Korea. The

year 1882, therefore, marks the date of the opening of Korea to foreigners. Bishop Ridel died in 1884 and was succeeded by his co-adjuter Bishop Blanc.

5. With the opening of the country to foreigners by the treaties, the missionaries began to come out into the open and to lay aside Korean dress. The Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres came to Korea in 1888. In 1890 a site was purchased for the cathedral. Bishop Blanc died the same year. The number of Catholics at the time of the Bishop's death was 17,577, and 500 adults had been baptized during the year. No native priests had been ordained as yet, but there were 40 seminarians studying for the priesthood either in Korea or abroad.

6. Bishop Blanc was succeeded by Bishop Mutel in 1890. The years following his appointment were a period of great political confusion. The conservatives resented foreign influence. Japan, China and Russia were struggling for control of the country. Many political parties and quasi-religious movements were initiated among the ignorant classes, all having the salvation of the country as their object. Sedition and banditry were rampant, thus hastening foreign control of the country. The missionaries suffered much as a consequence and many of them were forced to leave the provinces. Advantage, however, was taken of the absence of systematic official persecutions. In 1891 a seminary was built at Ryongsan on the site of the execution of the martyrs. A brick church, the first to be erected in Korea, was consecrated in the suburbs of Seoul in 1893. The cathedral was completed and consecrated in 1898 in the presence of thousands of Christians from all over the country and representatives of the foreign powers. In 1893 the wife of the Regent who was responsible for the persecution of 1869 was baptized. Some of the missionaries were able to take up permanent residence in the provincial capitals. Small chapels in Korean style began to spring up in the remote Christian districts in the provinces. But according to the treaties, which had been forced upon the Koreans by the great powers, missionaries were not allowed to settle outside the capital and the treaty ports. The missionaries' residences in the land districts were registered in the names of Korean Christians. It was not until Japan had defeated China in the war of 1894 and had established a protectorate over the country that the missionaries risked building in brick

outside the capital and the treaty ports; nor was it until the Japanese had formally annexed Korea in 1910 that religious freedom was formally proclaimed throughout Korea. Meanwhile, the number of missionaries, both French and Korean, continued to increase and new centers of missionary activity were constantly being opened and developed.

2.

Period of Ecclesiastical Organization

7. The appointment of Bishop Mutel in 1890 may be conveniently regarded as a turning point in the history of the Church in Korea. it marks the end of the period of official persecution and the emerging of the Catholics from the catacombs. Missionary activity could now be carried on in the open and, thanks to the treaties, the persons of the missionaries were comparatively safe.

8. By 1911 the number of Catholics had risen to 78,000. The same year the Holy See set up the new Vicariate of Taikon comprising four southern provinces with a total population of 7,000,000, of whom about 25,000 were Catholics. The original Vicariate, now called the Vicariate of Seoul, comprised the nine remaining provinces with a population of 8,000,000, of whom about 52,000 were Catholics.

9. In 1920 a further subdivision of Seoul Vicariate was made. The Benedictines of St. Odile, who had come to Korea in 1909 and had established a technical school in Seoul, were allotted two provinces in the northeast, touching the Sea of Japan. The new Bishop was consecrated in 1921. The Governor General, Baron Saito, was present at the consecration, and in an after-dinner speech warmly praised the work of the Catholic Missions.

10. Baron Saito was a genuine friend of the Korean people. During his term of office he cleared the country of low class Japanese adventurers. He liberalized and demilitarized the administration. He deprived the schoolmasters and railway officials of their swords, thus reducing them to the rank of ordinary civilians. This same Baron Saito was among the Elder Statesmen murdered by the militarists in Tokyo on February 21, 1937.

11. Through the efforts and good will of Baron Saito, the Government gave legal recognition and status to the missions, Catholic and Protestant, in Korea. This measure resolved the difficulties in connection with the holding of Church property. Each mission was recognized as a civil corporation of which the Ordinary was president, and the Vicar-General was vice-president; the other three members of the corporation were native Korean priests.

12. In 1922 a third division of the Vicariate of Seoul was made. Two northern provinces were allotted to the American missionaries of Maryknoll with the city of Pengyang as center. The total population of the two provinces at this time was 2,300,000. The number of Catholics was around 5,000, served by five Korean priests. The Protestants claimed 50,000 followers. In May, 1923 the first batch of Maryknollers, three in number, arrived in Korea to make preparation for the taking over of the new mission. No further divisions of mission territory were made until ten years later.

13. The foregoing introductory remarks bring us down to the year 1924. A glance at the missionary statistics for that year will help us to realize the progress made during the period 1890-94.

14. At the date of Bishop Mutel's appointment the number of Catholics was just around 18,000. Forty young Koreans were studying for the priesthood, but none had yet been ordained. The number of French missionaries was 19.

15. According to the statistics for the year 1923-24, there were 96,151 Catholics in all Korea. The number of European missionaries was 59 and the native clergy numbered 42. There were 8 European Brothers, 14 European Sisters, and 89 Korean Sisters. There were 3 seminaries with 56 students of philosophy and theology, 152 in the lower classes and 40 in the preparatory courses. There were almost 9,000 boys and girls in the Church primary schools. There was one high school for boys with an enrollment of about 200. The mission printing press in Seoul turned out 40,000 books and pamphlets during the year. The circulation of a monthly magazine in Korean was about 6,000. Besides orphanages and primary schools, the Sisters of St. Paul de Chartres conducted two high schools for girls.

16. This period, that is, from 1890 to 1924, saw the beginning and phenomenal development of Protestant missionary activity.

17. We mentioned above that the last royal edict against the Catholic religion was issued in 1881, and that Korea was opened to foreigners by the treaties of 1882 and the following years.

18. Previous to 1882 there had been no Protestant missionaries in Korea, but as soon as the treaties were concluded they began to make their appearance. The greater number of them were Americans. Their success was phenomenal. The following statistics will help to give an idea of the progress they made in a period of about forty years:

Protestant, Foreign Missionaries	542
Protestant, Korean Missionaries	611
Theological Schools	6
Theological Students	800
Catechists	1,449
Korean Protestants	295,698

19. They also had a medical school with 63 students, and 19 hospitals with about 700 beds in all. They had 7,600 boys and girls in their primary schools. They had also several high schools; also a university in Seoul which was financed by the Underwood family.

20. The Protestant missionaries made it their first aim to influence the upper and middle-classes among the Koreans. Their abundant funds, a yearly budget of about two million Yen (U.S. $4,000,000); their large and highly paid personnel, foreign and native; their schools, hospitals, printing press and other means of propaganda could not fail to make an impression. Educational and philanthropic work was given preference to strictly religious propaganda. In this way advantage was taken of the intellectual ferment produced by the opening of the country to foreign ideas. The mission schools introduced the young generation to the new ideas and to the material greatness of Europe and America. This new knowledge attracted and fascinated a people who in their long history had had no intercourse with Western science and civilization.

21. When, therefore, we consider Protestant missionary statistics we must not attach the same significance to them as we do to Catholic statistics. When Catholic statistics show a certain number of Christians, the figures stand for a number of people who had undergone a

prescribed period of instruction and probation, have been baptized and are bound to a Christian way of life. When we analyze Protestant statistics we find a certain core designated as "baptized," with a much more numerous fringe vaguely described as "communicants," "worshippers" and so on. For example, of the figures 295,698 given above, only 103,957 are designated as "baptized."

22. Besides, from the religious and moral point of view, the Protestant missionaries do not demand much from their converts. Protestantism in itself is a vague and elastic term. The requirements vary with the various sects and even with the individual missionaries. Definite doctrinal belief is a minimum and not much discipline is insisted upon, especially in the matter of marriages and concubinage. However, credit must be given to the Protestant missionaries for their philanthropic work, especially medical work. Their hospitals included all that was best in medical science and were staffed by skilled and devoted workers.

23. This period, following the treaties and especially from 1910, the year of the Japanese Annexation, was also marked by a religious ferment among the pagan population. The Japanese favored Buddhism as furnishing a cultural bond with Japan. They also introduced their own official Shintoism, that is, the worship of the Japanese Emperor and his ancestors. Shintoism, however, did not make any appeal to the Koreans. Shinto shrines were erected everywhere and visits to these were compulsory on certain days for officials and teachers. But this was regarded rather as a civil than a religious ceremony. On the fall of Japan in 1945 these shrines were all spontaneously burned by the Koreans as symbols of Japanese political power. At the same time there were many national religious movements and several sects sprung up. Their teachings were of the crudest character and their appeal were political rather than religious.

24. That there was no distinctive Korean religion or national culture worth mentioning is the truth. Their debt to China is as great as that of Europe to Greece and Rome and Christianity. The Koreans received Chinese civilization at the beginning of the historical period. Through them this civilization was passed on to the Japanese. But purely Korean and Japanese religious culture is merely stone-age. When, therefore, the Japanese annexed the country in 1910 they had nothing distinctive to offer the Koreans, in the way of religion

or civilization. They could only pass on what they themselves had already received from Europe and America and this was merely material science and technique.

25. Indeed, the efforts of the Protestant missionaries and those of the Japanese proceeded on the same lines and were complementary. Both put educational and philanthropic works in the forefront. The education given was predominantly scientific and technical, that is to say, materialistic.

26. From the annexation onwards, the Japanese, with their native thoroughness and doggedness, set about the modernization of the country on Japanese lines. A program of education was drawn up and put into effect. They set up a modern university in the capitol; also law, medical and technical schools. These were well staffed and magnificently housed. Every village was provided with a primary school and kindergarten, and every town with a high school. This program was practically completed before World War II, and all missionary schools practically eliminated. Education was a state monopoly in practice as well as in theory. The Japanese language had become the language of the young people, very few of them could read or write Korean.

27. It is hardly necessary to say that in this ferment the leaven of Catholicsim had not much influence. All the influences we have mentioned are of their nature inimical to the spirit of Catholicism. They were at best purely secular influences and predominantly materialistic. The effect on the young generations was anything but salutary. It might be described as a headiness and conceit produced by a smattering of Western scientific knowledge on top of a primitive moral and religious tradition.

28. This spiritual vacuum in the mind of the new generation left an opening for the entry of current ideologies. During these years of ferment nationalism was in the ascendant, owing to resentment at the Japanese annexation. The Protestant missionaries, who were predominantly American, favored nationalism. This, to a great extent, accounts for the phenomenal increase in conversions to Protestantism during the years following the first World War. In 1919, owing to the influence of the Wilsonian ideology of self-determination, a rebel-

lion broke out and was suppressed by the Japanese with their customary cruelty. This rebellion was the last protest against Japanese rule.

29. The educational program went into operation at an increased tempo. At the same time the economic development of the country was pushed ahead with increasing vigor. Roads, raliways and shipping lines were developed. Postal and telegraphic communications were pushed out to the remotest districts and reached a high state of efficiency. Irrigation schemes were developed as well as flood control. Hydro-electric plants brought current to the villages. The police system, civil and political, was thorough, and life and property were made perfectly safe.

30. The Japanese regime brought with it a period of prosperity such as Korea had never previously known in its history. Corrupt officials, bandits and the so-called Korean nobility no longer preyed upon the people. The new industries provided employment for the coolies. Agricultural schools and experimental stations improved methods of production among the small farmers. Peaceful conditions gave the Koreans an opportunity for saving. The standard of living of all classes was raised. The population increased from about 15,000,-000 in 1924 to about 22,000,000 in 1939. Unfortunately, Koreans were not given much responsibility in civil administration or industry. They were admitted into the lower ranks only, and always worked under Japanese supervision.

31. The Japanese regime worked both in favor of, and against the progress of the Church. On the favorable side may be counted the restoration of peace and preservation of order in the country which made the lives of the missionaries safe. Also the formal proc-lamation of religious freedom was a great advance compared with the long years of official persecution under the native regime.

32. The granting of legal status to religious bodies facilitated immeasurably missionary effort in the interior of the country. Property could be bought anywhere now in the name of Mission and mission-ary buildings erected without any anxiety regarding title. Improved communications made travel easier and made for closer contact with the mission stations and more efficient supervision. The lives of the missionaries themselves ceased to be the living matryrdom it had been under the old regime. They now had permanent residences to

which they could return from their trips. The public health-services, sanitation and water-supply brought down mortality among them. The Japanese were not hostile to the work of the missionaries among the poorer classes and the country people, and even welcomed the efforts of the missionaries for the betterment of the condition of these people. It was from among these people that the bulk of the Catholics were drawn.

33. Among the upper strata of the people it was somewhat different. Those depending on Japanese favor, officials, teachers and even business people, were not inclined to become Christians. To do so was regarded as implying a certain want of loyalty to the regime and a preference for foreigners. The Japanese state was in principle totalitarian and based on loyalty to the Emperor who was at once king and god. To be Christian implied a divided and half-hearted loyalty. But the greatest obstacle was the Japanese educational system which was at once monopolistic and materialistic. Its only non-materialistic basis was its stone-age political theology of the divinity of the state and the Emperor, and this was not taken very seriously by the Koreans.

34. However, the Church continued to make progress. There was nothing spectacular in the number of annual conversions. The catechumens were thoroughly instructed under the personal supervision of the missionary, and reliable Catholics were formed. There was nothing in the way of material advantage to be gained by becoming a Catholic.

3.

Later Developments

35. From the arrival of the Maryknoll missionaries in 1922, there was no further ecclesiastical reorganization of the country until 1933. In 1933 a province of the Vicariate Apostolic of Taikou in the south was set apart for the missionaries of St. Columban, ten of whom arrived in Taikou in October of that year to begin the study of the language. At the same time another province of the Taikou mission was set aside for the native clergy.

36. These new developments followed upon a national synod held in 1932 and presided over by Msgr. Mooney, then Apostolic Delegate in Japan and now Cardinal Archbishop of Detroit. Those two missions became independent in 1937 under their own Prefects Apostolic. The new native mission was the first to be set up in Korea—just about one hundred years after Korea had been made a Vicariate Apostolic. In 1939 a province of the Vicariate of Seoul was also allotted to the Missionaries of St. Columban. This reorganization brought the number of ecclesiastical divisions up to six, that is, three Vicariates and three Prefectures Apostolic.

37. The Catholic population of Korea was now around 146,000 or about twice that of 1924, but the total population of the country had increased by about 7,000,000 in the same period. The number of European missionaries was now 98 and the Korean priests numbered 95. Both figures were just about double the figures of 1924. Of the foreign missionaries, 31 were Maryknollers and 15 Columbans. There were 60 foreign missionary Sisters of whom 20 were Maryknollers, 18 German Benedictines and 22 Sisters of St. Paul de

Chartres. The number of Korean Sisters was 136, these also being members of the congregation of St. Paul de Chartres. The Sisters were engaged in teaching and hospital work and the management of orphanages. The formation of the native clergy had made great progress during these years. This development proved itself the salvation of the Missions on the outbreak of World War II.

38. In the matter of education, attempts were made to establish primary schools satisfying in staff, buildings and equipment the standards required by the Government. In all Korea only about half a dozen were actually established by the missionaries. These accommodated around five or six thousand pupils, boys and girls. But the government exercised so much control over the program and staff, that, from the Catholic point of view, the schools served little or no distinctive purpose and it was open to debate whether the schools were worth the trouble and expense they entailed. The most that could be said in their favor was that in a center where the Catholics were sufficiently numerous to fill them, the schools were better for Catholics than the purely state schools. But from the point of view of positive evangelization their effect was practically nil.

39. Real efforts, however, were made by the missionaries to provide voluntary schools for the poorer children. (The more well-to-do parents sent their children to the state school, the diploma of which was necessary for finding employment after leaving school). These schools were carried on with the permission of the local education authority. The teachers required certain qualifications and the program of instruction was also approved. There was freedom for religious instruction, but often the local police who were above the law, had their own ideas on education. They constantly paid surprise visits to see if "foreign" doctrine was being taught so that here "eternal vigilance was the price of liberty." The Maryknoll Mission had about 50 schools of this kind with around 2,500 pupils. The German Benedictines had a slightly higher enrollment in theirs.

40. The Maryknoll Mission may be taken as an example to illustrate the missionary progress made during this period (1924-39). The first three Maryknollers took up residence in their territory in April, 1924. Previous to that date the territory hal been served by five missionaries, all of whom were Koreans. The Catholic popu-

lation of the territory was a little short of 5,000 and the total population 2,300,000. By 1939 the total population had risen to 3,500,000 but the Catholic population increased during the same period to almost 21,000. This is to be attributed to the increase in the number of workers in the territory. In 1924 there were 5 missionaries; in 1939 there were 31 Maryknollers and 3 native priests, 19 Maryknoll Sisters and 9 Korean Sisters. Also, the Maryknollers were able to concentrate their activities and resources in an area very small in comparison with the vast area of Seoul Vivariate, from which the Maryknoll territory had been detached. This, of course, is the very reason for the sub-division of large mission territories.

41. The Maryknoll missionaries devoted the resources at their disposal to evangelization through Catholic schools and catechists. In 1939 they had 80 teachers in their schools of every kind, including Catechetical and night schools, and about 5,600 boys and girls. The whole mission territory was divided into 20 parishes comprising numerous sub-divisions, all provided with men and women catechists.

42. A similar account could be given of the German Benedictines' Mission of Wonsan where the same methods of evangelization were applied in similar conditions and with similar happy results. These methods, of course, were not new. They were merely the application of methods already initiated by the Foreign Missionaries of Paris, but applied more intensely in smaller areas and with a more numerous personnel and more adequate material resources.

43. It is, perhaps, worthy of note in passing that in 1939 the number of foreign missionaries and native Koreans were about equal; that is, around 100 of each. At the same time about one-third of the foreigners were French and the remaining two-thirds made up of Americans, Germans and Irish who had charge of 5 provinces out of 13.

44. The National Synod of 1932, along with other enactments, laid down regulations obliging the Catholics to contribute financially to the support of the Church. Hitherto the missions depended almost completely on outside support. From now on a systematic plan was put in operation for the maintenance of the Korean Church, as far as their means would allow, by the Korean Catholics themselves. The urgent reason for this line of action was the setting up of new mis-

sions run by the Korean clergy. If these were to survive, they would have to be maintained by the Korean Christians. They could not be regarded as really independent if they were not self-supporting. The plan was further justified by the improvement in the economic status of the people under the efficient administration of the Japanese. The Christians were now able to contribute financially to the support of the Church.

45. It is to the credit of the Korean Christians that they responded to the call of the National Synod. At first, the contributions were small but each year showed an improvement. Meanwhile, the Catholics were instructed in the obligation of supporting the Church, and this duty was especially emphasized in the instruction of new converts. It is worthy of note that in those missions where the majority of the Christians were recent converts, contributions were highest. This development bore rich fruit when the war in the Pacific cut off Korea from the outside world. Indeed, the two things which were the salvation of the Church in Korea in this crisis were: the existence of a numerous Korean native clergy and the generosity of the Korean Catholics and their consciousness of their duty to support their Church.

4.

The Missions and the Pacific War

46. In spite of the comparative freedom enjoyed by the missions under the Japanese regime, the shadow of the policeman hung over all the missionary's activities. The police system was efficient and ever watchful for not only any movement against the regime but also for any ideas which seemed to conflict with the spirit of the regime.

47. In practice, the police were above the law. They entered homes, and interrogated anyone against whom they had the slightest suspicion. Foreigners were under constant supervision. Every movement of the missionaries was shadowed and every form of missionary activity scrutinized. This was true even of the best of times. On the outbreak of the war with China in Manchuria in 1931, when the Japanese military were running amok and engaged in a struggle for supremacy with the Government at home, police supervision became more meticulous. At the outbreak of the so-called China Incident in 1937 the military had consolidated their power and police power was complete and unquestioned in all departments of public administration.

48. From around this date a propaganda campaign was initiated by the police in which everyone was expected and forced to cooperate. This campaign had for its object the raising, or as it was put, "the enhancment" of the "National Spirit," that is, the Japanese spirit. The emotional driving force invoked in the campaign was the worship of the Emperor and the ideal proposed was the creation of a "New Order in East Asia." The campaign was carried on most intensely in the schools. The teachers were turned into mere mouth-

pieces of propaganda. In the higher schools, boys were put into quasi-military uniform and subjected to strict military discipline and training. One could see no difference between a school and a barracks.

49. Needless to say, this state of affairs put a damper on missionary activity. Christian activity appeared out of place in the "National crisis." It did not appear to contribute in any way to the "enhancement of the national spirit" or to the promotion of a "New Order in East Asia." On the contrary, it was a distraction. Interest in religion, and especially contact with the missionaries either Korean or foreigners, showed an indifference and want of whole-hearted cooperation.

50. The campaign did not create much enthusiasm among the villagers. As far as Koreans were concerned, it was thoroughly stupid in that it made no appeal whatever to Korean sentiment. The Korean who retained any feeling of patriotism was not interested in the country places did not fall off to any appreciable extent. The quest in East Asia. Now, it was among these people that the Church found the great majority of its converts, so that the flow of conversion in the divinity of the Emperor, nor in a program of Japanese conpropaganda had its greatest effect among the young people in the schools. These were enthusiastic Japoniphiles and their enthusiasm reached fever pitch with the initial Japanese successes in the early stages of the war.

51. From the Japanese point of view, the question confronting them was this? What part were the religious bodies to play in "enhancing the New Order"? Was it not the first duty of the religious bodies to devote all their energies to this object in such a critical period? It was even suggested in high quarters that the missionaries should lay aside Christian propaganda for the moment and concentrate on nationalist ideology! The further question then arose: How could foreigners lead the Christians along the correct national path? Now, the Catholic Church leaders were the Ordinaries and were recognized as such by the Government, seeing that they were accorded legal status, as the heads of the Missions. Hence the necessity of having Japanese subjects as heads of the Missions.

52. This attitude of the authorities was soon made clear to the

Bishops and missionaries and Christians through the police on the occasion of their domiciliary visits. The police left no uncertain impression that things would not be very pleasant for either the missionaries or their followers, as long as their leaders were foreigners.

53. Already before Pearl Harbor all the foreign bishops in Japan proper had tendered their resignation to the Holy See and their resignations were accepted and Japanese appointed in their places. In Korea a short time before Pearl Harbor the Bishop of Seoul had been replaced by a Korean.

54. However, there was no question of religious persecution. There was no objection at any time to the foreign Ordinaries and missionaries as Catholics but as foreigners. This was recognized by the Ordinaries themselves and by the missionaries. But if the Ordinaries had insisted on holding on to their office, or if the Holy See had refused to accept their resignations, a persecution of religion could easily have been the result. The resignation of the Ordinaries was the way to spare the Church such an ordeal. It may also be remarked that the authorities left the Holy See complete freedom in the choice of the new Ordinaries, and placed no obstacle in the way of the carrying out of the necessary formalities, religious and civil, in connection with their assumption of office.

55. In Korea, only the Bishop of Seoul, the capital, had been replaced before Pearl Harbor. The others were replaced by either Japanese or Koreans during the course of the war. But the position of foreigners had become very difficult. For some months previous to Pearl Harbor no foreigners were allowed to enter a train or a bus without a special permission and a police escort.

56. On the evening of Pearl Harbor all the Maryknollers and Columban missionaries were lodged in the local jail; but with a few exceptions, they were not treated brutally. They were assured that their arrest was for the sake of their own safety! Many of the leading Catholics and catechists and teachers were also arrested and subjected to long interrogations. The local police seemed bent on getting evidence of espionage against the missionaries. In the other missions, the French, German and native missionaries were not arrested. Gradually the Americans and British, that is, Australians and New Zealanders, were sorted out and removed to better surroundings to await repatriation as enemy subjects.

57. The Columban missionaries in their northern province were eventually allowed back to their posts. The Columban missionaries in the south were detained in the local jails for two months and eventually interned in their own central residence. The reason for this apparently was that their mission was a strategic zone and the military were very anxious about their presence in the province at all. Indeed, for the last few months of the war they were taken out of the province altogether and interned in a village in the north near the Capital. Three of them who had been stationed on a strategic island (Chei Chu) in the China Sea were indicted for espionage and ideological offenses. They received sentences from two to four years, which they served under very harsh conditions. This was done at the orders of the Japanese Naval Commander of the Area. This same Commander was among those hanged by the Americans later for crimes committed in the Philippines.

58. Seeing, therefore, that the French, German and native Korean missionaries, and the Irish (in one province) were allowed to remain at their posts, with their activities very much curtailed however, there were just three provinces in which the situation was serious. The Columban missionaries in the south had six Korean priests to take their places. These were sufficient to minister to the urgent needs of the Catholics who numbered around 5,000.

59. But the greatesst blow which the missions received was the complete repatriation of the Maryknoll missionaries, who then numbered about 35 priests and 20 Maryknoll Sisters. The Maryknoll Mission was now left with three Korean priests to minister to about 22,000 Catholics. Besides, the help from America on which the support of the schools and catechists depended was cut off. However, the new Korean Bishop was able to get missionaries from Seoul Vicariate for essential work. But there was an end to progress; and in the missions, not to go forward is to go backwards. The financial support of the Catholics, who had been well trained in this matter, was sufficient for the support of the clergy and the continuance of a certain amount of missionary activity.

60. With the defeat of the Japanese and the arrival of the American Army of Occupation, complete freedom came for the missionaries in the American Zone, south of the 38 parallel. The Iron Curtain

sealed off a portion of the Vicariate of Seoul and completely sealed off the former Maryknoll territory as well as the German Benedictine Mission. Naturally the Maryknollers have not been able to return to the Missions, but some few returned to work in the Vicariate of Seoul.

61. From the information, such as it is, which manages to get through the Iron Curtain, it would appear that the Russians have not suppressed religion in their Zone, but have confined themselves to an intense anti-God propaganda among the young people. The churches have not been closed so far; in fact the Korean Bishop in Pengyang, the former Maryknoll center, has been allowed to build a new church in that city.

5.

"The Contemporary Situation"

62. Having traced the history of the Catholic Missions in Korea from their beginning down to the present day, one may be tempted in the light of the foregoing sketch to make guesses as to what the future, that is, the more immediate future, has in store for the Church in that country.

63. A European contemporary in 1777, upon learning of the introduction of Christianity into Korea by native Koreans, who were not themselves as yet baptized Christians, might have been tempted to prophesy the speedy and peaceful conversion of the people to Christianity—as happened, for example, in the case of Ireland, which in a way was also a "Hermit Kingdom" inasmuch as it had not come under Roman influence. St. Augustine's "Anima Naturaliter Christiana" would instinctively occur to his mind. Yet the hundred years following 1777 saw persecution unsurpassed in cruelty and bloodshed in the history of modern missions.

64. So, too, in Japan the Christian population of the country is generally supposed to have exceeded a million not long after the death of St. Francis Xavier. We have already seen that a missionary accompanied the Japanese Army around the year 1600. A contemporary might have been tempted to prophesy the ultimate, if not the speedy conversion of the whole people; yet, in a short period persecution had all but extinguished Christianity in the country. The initial successes of the Jesuits had a similar sequel.

65. Any guesses, therefore, as to the future of the Church in Korea must be made with the greatest diffidence. It must be remembered, too, that Christianity in Korea is a very recent growth. The

first Bishop was appointed barely 120 years ago, and during the first 50 years three bloody persecutions all but stamped out the infant Church. Indeed, up to about 60 years ago, the missions in Korea were an underground movement. The Church has as yet enjoyed only about 60 years of comparative freedom in which to work. Today, out of a total population of about 22,000,000, only 150,000 are Catholics and the number of native Korean priests about 120. It is well to keep these facts in mind when we speak of "The Church in Korea." The Church is a new and delicate plant and to speculate about its future development is premature.

66. Nor can we say that the period of persecution is past in Korea and that the history of the first 60 years is unlikely to be repeated in the near future. The early persecutions were inspired by the nationalism or tribalism of a people who in their long history never had contacts with the outside world, but present-day ideologies, nationalistic or communistic, could well inspire persecutions not less ferocious.

67. Bearing in mind that the Church in Korea is as yet but a mustard seed, it might be more profitable to study a little the environment in which the seed is sprouting and see what, from the human point of view, of course, we might humanly expect as to the next stage in its growth and development.

68. As has been already pointed out, the history of contemporary Korea begins with the treaties of 1882. Up to that time Westerners were rigidly prevented from entering the "Hermit Kingdom." Even ship-wrecked sailors were massacred. With the opening of the country to foreigners, the way was open for revolutionary changes in the lives of the people.

69. Of course, the Catholic missionaries had already been in the country for the greater part of a century, during which time they lived in hiding. In any case their influences were purely religious. They accommodated themselves to the customs of the country and made no attempt to introduce distinctively Western ideas or customs into the country.

70. Distinctively Western ideas were introduced mainly by the Protestant missionaries who began to enter Korea as soon as the

country was opened to foreigners by the Treaties. The Protestant missionaries were Americans for the most part. We have already referred to their work and influence in Chapter 4. We indicated there the nature of their propaganda methods. (We are not using the term in its present day pejorative sense.) We said they put educational and philanthropic work in the forefront. The great majority and the best of their workers were engaged in this kind of work, which was associated with a certain amount of bible reading.

71. We are not attempting to belittle the educational and philanthropic work as such of the Protestant missionaries, still less are we condemning these as means of missionary propaganda. We are merely appraising its influence from the Catholic point of view. It was predominantly scientific and technical, and secular in the sense that it was only tenuously associated with definite religious teaching. The high standard of teaching and equipment made the Protestant missionary schools attractive to the upper classes who could afford to take advantage of them. However, the Protestant mission schools were of comparatively small importance in the Westernization of the country in that they reached a very small numerical proportion of the people. They were the first in the field and up to the Japanese annexation practically the sole channel of distinctively Western secular ideas and technique.

72. The other channel of Western ideas and techniques was the Japanese, who eventually made the whole educational system a virtual state monopoly. The system was on the most up-to-date Western lines. It was altogether scientific and technical—in fact materialistic —if, indeed, it had any explicit philosophical basis at all. It was associated with the native Japanese stone-age Shintoism, which had no appeal whatever to the Koreans. The important point is that during the formative period of modern Korea, education was, to put it frankly, at its best secular and predominantly materialistic. It was never integrated with any definite religious or moral system which could stand up to philosophical criticism so that, *faute de mieux*, materialism became the philosophy of the new generation.

73. The youth of Korea has been educated on these lines for about 50 years. We who have seen its results at home hardly need to be told of its effects on the Koreans. Indeed, its effects upon

Orientals is infinitely more pronounced than on the contemporary Western generations. In the Orient modern scientific and technical ideas have been poured into a spiritual vacuum. Not only genuine scientific knowledge is absorbed, but in the absence of a genuine religious or philosophical tradition by which to criticize and evaluate what is presented as science, the illegitimate aberrations of science are swallowed as being equally valid with genuine science.

74. The products of this education are to be met with not only in Korea, but everywhere in the Orient. Having merely an uncritical smattering of Western science, without root in their environment, ready victims of modern ideologies to fill the spiritual vacuum left by the loss of faith in their own religious and moral traditions, they drift into politics becoming Nationalists, Democrats, or Communists according to the prevailing fashions. They learn the jargon of their ideologies and often succeed in convincing people in America and Europe that they are the genuine article and representative of "enlightened" and "progressive" public opinion in the Far East.

75. Simultaneously with the introduction of Western education, Korea was also Westernized economically after the pattern of Japan itself with the economy of which Korea was integrated. The two countries formed one economic and industrial unit. This industrial development along with internal peace and an efficient state administration led to a remarkable rise in the standard of living of the Koreans and an increase in the population. For example, the population increased from 15,000,000 in 1924 to 22,000,000 in 1939.

76. The thousands of young people graduating from the schools each year were able to find employment in the lower ranks of the administration, in the professions and in industrial and commercial undertakings. Improvements in agriculture, irrigation and drainage as well as agricultural schools and experimental stations enabled the land to support a growing population. With the fall of Japan in 1945, this whole administrative and economic structure, built up over a period of about 40 years, collapsed over night.

77. This structure never had any independent foundation in the country and can never be rebuilt. The period of Japanese domination was comparatively short, nor had the Japanese anything to offer the Koreans in the way of civilization, so that the regime did nothing

to change the national character. Nor were the Koreans admitted to any positions of responsibility in the higher levels of civil administration and industry. Besides, the Koreans appear to have little native capacity for efficient governmental administration or for industry.

78. Korea, therefore, at the present moment is burdened with a huge population which has been over-night deprived of all opportunity for profitable employment. They might be aptly described as "displaced persons." They are ready—the "intelligentsia" no less than the proletariat—for the Communist agitator. Indeed, he has been at work among them openly since the end of the war, even in the American Zone, not to mention the Russian, where Communism is the official creed. Such a situation does not count in favor of the Church. With the advent of Communist ideology among the "intelligentsia," from which class the leaders will be drawn, it may easily happen that Communism will take the place of the old paganism in the new Korea and play the same role towards the Church.

79. Turning now to the strictly missionary point of view, the most recent development has been the increasing responsibility in Church government and administration by the native Korean clergy. Already for about 20 years before the outbreak of the war in the Pacific, a development on these lines had been going on in the Far East, and during that period native Bishops had been appointed to missions manned solely by native personnel. This was a normal development in face of the increasing number of Christians and native clergy.

80. We have seen how immediately before and during the Pacific War all the foreign ordinaries were forced to resign in Japan and in Korea. This, however, cannot be regarded as a normal development. It was a wartime necessity and it was the salvation of the missions in the Japanese Empire that suitable natives were at hand to take the places of the foreigners. In Korea there was only one native mission in existence at the outbreak of the war and one in preparation. At present there is one in the Russian Zone. In the American Zone there is one French and two Columban. One of the Columban Ordinaries is an American.

81. This development, although somewhat ahead of its due time, does take away the reproach that the Church's rulers in the new

Korea are foreigners and gives the Church, small though it may be in point of number of adherents, a certain prestige from the national point of view and strengthens the roots of the seedling in Korean soil. The change, however, is but a change in generalship. The effective strength of the missionary army is not thereby increased. There are still but around 100 native clergy for 150,000 Catholics—not to mention the 22,000,000 pagan population.

82. Foreign missionaries and foreign help will be just as necessary as ever if further progress is to be made towards Christianizing the country. The foreigners, however, will no longer be the leaders in missionary development. They will work under the direction of Korean Bishops on whom will rest the whole responsibility and initiative in a situation in many respects as serious and difficult as ever confronted the Church in its short history in the country.

83. Whatever the future may have in store for the Church in Korea, we can count on the fidelity and self-sacrifice of the Korean Christians. They have been formed under persecution and at no time had they any worldly inducement offered them to become Christians. Even under the Japanese regime of official religious liberty, to be Christian implied a certain disloyalty towards that quasi-totalitarian regime. And during the Pacific War when foreign financial aid was cut off from abroad the Christians rose to the occasion and contributed to the support of their missions in a way which surprised even veteran missionaries.

"Forsan et haec olim meminisse juvabit."

Study Outline

Gerald C. Treacy, S.J.

In 57 B.C. there were three kingdoms in Korea. They were constantly at war with each other and with China and Japan. In 681 A.D. the period of national unity began, and by 918 A.D. a single kingdom was formed. It was called Korye, and from it we get the name Korea.

From the 10th century until the rise of Japan in the 19th century Korea remained a Chinese vassal. The cultural influence of China over Korea had been paramount from the beginning of Korean history. In fact Korean civilization has never had a national character. Buddhism and Confucianism entered Korea together with Chinese letters, and from Korea spread to Japan. Thus civilization reached Japan from China through Korean Buddhist missionaries.

The primitive religion of Korea was nature worship under the form of spirits. Today the great mass of the people are indifferent to all forms of religion. They are superstitious and have frequent recourse to fortune tellers and magicians. They are a simple people and have always been exploited by the Chinese and Japanese.

Forty years after the death of St. Francis Xavier a Japanese army invaded Korea, and the Jesuit army chaplain, Fr. de Cespades tried to preach Christianity to the Koreans. He had little success. But the army had captured many Koreans and sent them to Japan as slaves. Many of them became Christians and some became martyrs. For the next two hundred years there were hardly any contacts with Christianity. It was through China that contacts were finally renewed.

It was customary for the King of Korea to send an embassy to China each year with tribute and presents. During their sojourn in Pekin many of the members met the Jesuit missionaries who were in the Capital, and from them received books on science and religion. In 1783 a group of Korean scholars requested a member of the embassy for that year, named Ry Syeng, to get in touch with the Pekin Jesuits, and secure more books from them, treating of Christian belief. Ry not only did this but became a Christian, returned to Korea and began a missionary apostolate there. In his misguided enthusiasm he decided to establish the Catholic hierarchy in Korea. He and a few

others were elected priests, and one a bishop. In all good faith they administered the sacraments. This continued for about two years. Then they wrote the Bishop of Pekin asking him if they were right in their procedure. He told them to teach and baptize but not to attempt to carry out the functions of rightly ordained priests. Their next step was to ask for missioners from Pekin.

Questions

How did we get the name *Korea?*
How long did Korea remain a Chinese vassal?
What did this vassalage amount to?
Korean civilization has never had a national character. Explain.
How did civilization reach Japan?
What was the primitive religion of the Koreans?
As a people how do Koreans compare with Chinese and Japanese?
Christianity was first introduced into Korea by the Japanese Army. Explain.
What is the story of Ry Syeng and the Korean Embassy?
Describe Fr. Chou's apostolate in Korea.
What hastened the spread of the Faith in Korea during the persecution of 1839?
Why was Korea called the Hermit Kingdom?
Why does the year 1911 mark an epoch in the Church of Korea?
How did World War I affect the Korean mission?
How was the Governor General, Baron Saito, disposed toward the missions ?
The appointment of Bishop Mutel in 1890 meant much to the Church in Korea. Explain.
What progress was made by the Church in Korea from 1890-1924?
What of Protestant missionary activity during that time?
What was the first aim of the Protestant missionaries?
How are we to understand Protestant missionary statistics?
What may be said of the philanthropic work of the Protestant missionaries?
What did Japan have to offer the Koreans in religion or civilization?
During Japanese rule how was Korea modernized?

Was Korea prosperous under Japanese rule?
The Japanese regime worked for and against the Church. Explain.
What was the greatest obstacle to conversion under Japanese rule?
How did the development of a native clergy affect the Korean mission?
Give an estimate of the value of the mission schools in Korea.
What did the National Synod of 1932 prescribe about Church support?
What two things were the salvation of the Korean Church when the war came?
Why did all foreign bishops resign their sees in Japan and Korea?
How did the repatriation of the Maryknoll missioners affect Korea?
About how many years of freedom has the Church in Korea enjoyed?
Is all danger of future persecution over in Korea?
How did Protestant missionary effort differ from Catholic effort?
What was the effect of the educational efforts of the Japanese?
What was the effect of Japan's industrialization of Korea?
Why is Korea at present ripe for Communist propaganda?

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A Note on the Author

The Rev. Owen MacPolin is a member of St. Columban's Foreign Mission Society. He was born in the Diocese of Dromore, Ireland, in 1889 and studied in the Diocesan Seminary and in the National Seminary of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, obtaining a degree of M. A. Hons. from the National University of Ireland and a degree of S.T.L. from Maynooth, where he was ordained in 1915. After spending one year as assistant in a parish in his native diocese, Father MasPolin became a chaplain in the British Army during World War I. After the war he joined St. Columban's and was stationed in Hanyang, China, from 1920 to 1924, and again from 1931 to 1933. Between 1924 and 1931 he occupied the post of Oeconomus Generalis of the Society.

When the Society was requested to take over a mission in Korea in 1933, Father MacPolin became the first Superior of the new mission, and from 1937 to 1941 was Prefect Apostolic of the Prefecture of Chylla Nam Do, Korea. In 1941 he was interned by the Japanese and resigned in order to permit a native priest to take over the direction of the Prefecture. He returned to Ireland in 1948 and was appointed to teach at St. Columban's Seminary, St. Columbans, Nebraska.

The authors of the various studies of the Missionary Academia express their own views, which are necessarily independent of the National Council of The Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

The study outline and questions for "The Church in Korea in Modern Times," were formulated by Gerald C. Treacy, S.J., who has prepared study club editions of various encyclicals.

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